

# club



with DAVID DOMONEY

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## OFFER of the week

Spring-flowering Primula auricula (mixed) is a truly exotic hardy evergreen Primula in a breathtaking range of colours.

Classed as an alpine Primula, they have attractive fleshy leaves with protruding flowers up to 20-25cm tall.

Each flower stem produces an umbel of up to 30 flowers for a long period from early spring. Hardy 5cm module plants supplied. You can buy six Primula auricula for £9.99 or buy 12 for £19.98 and get 6 six free.

To order by debit/credit card call 0843 922 5000 quoting SM33184 or send a cheque made payable to MGN SM33184 to Primula Offer (SM33184), PO Box 64, South West District Office, Manchester, M16 9HY or visit [mirrorgardenoffers.co.uk](http://mirrorgardenoffers.co.uk).



**CUTTING EDGE A**  
A garden knife



**CHOP CHOP**  
Secateurs

perfect for planting seeds. For larger gardens, or those with more space to store tools, there are a few extra more job-specific pieces of equipment that can come in handy.

A bulb planter is a nifty little bit of kit that makes planting bulbs a doddle. You push it down into the soil and twist to remove a core of soil at your desired depth, creating the perfect

hole for planting any type of bulb. If you do a lot of container planting, then you may want to invest in a potting scoop which makes light work of filling pots with soil.

When transplanting seedlings and small plants, a widgeo can be inserted into the soil and used to lever the plant out gently, avoiding any damage to its roots. For weeding, the more old-

fashioned among us like to use our hands or a trowel to dig weeds out. However you could save yourself a serious amount of time and backache with just a few more clever tools.

There are many types of hoe for weeding, but I like the three-edge hoe, which has blades on the front, back and side, which are set at an angle enabling an easy cutting action to

remove weeds by slicing the stem or cutting them out from the ground.

If you are waging war on dandelions in your garden, then go in for the kill with a corkscrew weeder, which is perfect for long, tap-rooted weeds and pulls the whole plant out in its entirety.

I also have a fantastic long-handled multi-weeder that can remove a variety of different weeds – it has a long reach to reduce back strain.

And don't forget the razor hoe – this one has a sharp blade to slice out weeds and can also be used to scrape out weeds between paving slabs.

Every gardener has a different set of tools because every garden is different, so find what works for you and stick with it.

All my tools are from UK-based brand Kent & Stowe, which has a great range that are all durable, attractive and excellent quality.

Maintaining your tools with a sharpener and oil will go a long way in making sure they work properly. There are also lighter ranges available if you find heavy tools difficult to wield.

You can even get specialist kids tools that are lighter and perfectly sized for growing gardeners, enabling you to teach your little ones all about the wonders of the garden.

## GADGET



If you've got big hedges, having a proper ladder is a must.

I've seen many gardeners making do with a rickety old stepladder that's seen better days. Not only does this make the job harder, it can be highly dangerous too.

These Niwaki tripod ladders are purpose-made for gardens and pruning. They're not cheap – this model costs £249 – but, frankly, they'll last and last and keep you pruning safely.

I found them on [niwaki.com](http://niwaki.com).

## a little bit of community spirit

We've launched our fantastic Cultivation Street competition in conjunction with the Sunday Mirror and our brilliant new sponsor, Calliope® Flowers.

So if you are involved in a school or community gardening project, there is a total prize pot of £20,500 up for grabs. We've been rewarding people who make their schools, streets and communities better since 2012.

One of the key categories is for Garden Centre Ambassador of the year – rewarding those employees who go that extra mile to help out. This year's



top prize is a stunning £1,000, with a second prize of £500 – third prize is £300. Twelve runners-up get £100.

Last year's Ambassador of the Year, Matthew Lewis of the Old Railway Line Garden Centre in Brecon, Powys, said: "I love working with community groups and schools. It's very rewarding to see communities coming together and

creating beautiful spaces within their town or village.

"I love growing fruit and veg in my own garden. It's very rewarding to be able to pick food you have grown yourself for dinner. You can't beat the fresh, delicious taste of homegrown food.

"I would encourage other garden centres to get involved and reach out to local community groups and schools to advise them of the benefits of taking part in Cultivation Street."

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